

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 UDORN 00487 01 OF 02 251418Z

42

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ITFE-05 EUR-12 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15

VO-03 SCA-01 DHA-02 ORM-01 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

DODE-00 IO-10 /077 W

----- 068201

R 220601Z JUL 75

FM AMCONSUL UDORN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 490

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 UDORN 0487U

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, LA, TH, VS

SUBJECT: THAI DAM REFUGEES IN NONGKHAI

REF: A. VIENTIANE 3872

B. STATE 164598

C. UDORN 414

SUMMARY. 1200 THAI DAM (BLACK THAI) IN NONGKHAI WANT TO GO TO THE US; ANOTHER 1200 WANT TO GO TO FRANCE. 448 OF THE FORMER ARE IN FAMILIES OF USG EMPLOYEES OR PERSONS WITH CLOSE RELATIVES IN THE US. TWO-THIRDS OF THE 1200 ARE IN EDUCATED FAMILIES. "HILL TRIBESMEN" IS NOT AN ACCURATE DESCRIPTIVE TERM TO APPLY TO THE THAI DAM IN NONG KHAI. THERE WOULD BE PRACTICAL AND ETHICAL PROBLEMS IF PAROLE FOR THE THAI DAM WERE MORE RESTRICTED THAN FOR THE LAO. END SUMMARY.

1. IN SUPPORT OF VIENTIANE'S REQUEST FOR LIMITED PAROLE AUTHORITY FOR SOME THAI DAM (BLACK THAI) REFUGEES IT MIGHT BE USEFUL IF WE PROVIDED A PROFILE OF THE THAI DAM REFUGEES AT THE CAMP IN NONGKHAI. GENERALLY SPEAKING, THIS
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 UDORN 00487 01 OF 02 251418Z

GROUP IS MADE UP OF FAIRLY WELL EDUCATED CITY PEOPLE AND

MANY HAVE CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH AMERICANS. ALTHOUGH PERHAPS IT IS ACCURATE TO CATEGORIZE THE TOTAL POPULATION OF THAI DAM IN LAOS AND VIETNAM AS "HILL TRIBESMEN", THE RUBRIC CARRIES CONNOTATIONS OF PRIMITIVENESS THAT CANNOT FAIRLY BE APPLIED TO THE GROUP IN NONGKHAI, WHICH IS MOST OF THE THAI DAM THAT WE ARE TALKING ABOUT.

2. ACCORDING TO THAI DAM LEADERS MR. CAM UYNH AND DR. BACCAM THUYEN, WHO VISITED US AGAIN LAST THURSDAY, THERE ARE 2400 THAI DAM IN THE NONGKHAI CAMP. THEY SAID ROUGHLY HALF OF THEM WANT TO GO TO THE US, AND HALF WANT TO GO TO FRANCE.

3. OF THE 1200 WHO WANT TO GO TO THE US, THERE ARE 42 EX-USG EMPLOYEES. WITH THEIR FAMILIES THEY TOTAL 389 PEOPLE. THERE ARE EIGHT OTHER FAMILIES (59 PEOPLE) WITH CLOSE RELATIVES IN THE US.

4. WE CAN SEE BROAD EVIDENCE OF EDUCATION BY LOOKING AT THE OCCUPATION OF THE HEADS OF FAMILY OF THE OTHER 750 WHO WANT TO TO TO THE US. THIS GROUP CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING:

| OCCUPATION | NUMBER | INCLUDING FAMILIES |
|-------------------------|--------|--------------------|
| SECRETARY | 11 | 109 |
| MILITARY OFFICER | 8 | 63 |
| ACCOUNTANT | 5 | 34 |
| AIRCRAFT MECHANIC | 5 | 45 |
| TEACHER | 4 | 35 |
| RLG CIVIL SERVANT | 3 | 14 |
| DRAFTSMAN | 3 | 22 |
| NURSE | 2 | 16 |
| ELECTRICIAN | 2 | 15 |
| BANKER | 1 | 7 |
| ENGINEER | 1 | 2 |
| RADIO-TELETYPE OPERATOR | 1 | 13 |
| X-RAY TECHNICIAN | 1 | 3 |
| PHOTOGRAPHER | 1 | 7 |
| PRINTING TECHNICIAN | 1 | 10 |
| AIRFIELD SUPERVISOR | 1 | 6 |
| RADIO & WATCH REPAIRMAN | 1 | 3 |

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 UDORN 00487 01 OF 02 251418Z

| | | |
|------------------|----|-----|
| DENTIST | 1 | 11 |
| MECHANIC | 1 | 5 |
| AIRLINE EMPLOYEE | 1 | 10 |
| AGRONOMIST | 1 | 8 |
| TOTALS | 55 | 438 |

5. ADDING THE NUMBERS IN PARAS 3 & 4, ABOUT TWO-THIRDS OF THE 1200 THAI DAM IN NONGKHAI WHO WANT TO GO TO THE

US HAVE HEADS OF FAMILY WHO ARE EDUCATED/SKILLED OR HAVE CLOSE RELATIVES IN THE US. AMONG THE OTHER ONE-THIRD, THE MAIN OCCUPATIONS OF THE HEAD OF FAMILY ARE HOUSEHOLD SERVANT (126, INCLUDING FAMILIES), LAO MILITARY OF UNSPECIFIED RANK (58), AND DRIVER (55). THERE ARE NINE FAMILIES (48 PEOPLE) WHERE THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY IS A FARMER.

6. IN GENERAL MAKE-UP, THE THAI DAM REFUGEES IN NONGKHAI DIFFER LITTLE FROM THE VIETNAMESE OR LAO REFUGEES COMING OUT OF LAOS. WE HAVE HELD OFF SENDING IN VISAS FALCON MESSAGES ON THE THAI DAM WHO HAVE COME TO US REQUESTING POLITICAL ASYLUM BECAUSE OF UNCERTAINTY ON HOW THEY WERE TO BE CLASSIFIED. THE CLOSER WE LOOK AT THE NONGKHAI GROUP OF THAI DAM, HOWEVER, THE MORE UNCOMFORTABLE WE FEEL ABOUT DISCRIMINATING BETWEEN THEM AND THE VIETNAMESE

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PAGE 01 UDORN 00487 02 OF 02 220934Z

42

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 491

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 UDORN 487

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, LA, TH, VS

SUBJECT: THAI DAM REFUGEES IN NONGKHAI

EX-EMPLOYEES WHO HAVE GONE TO THE US AND THE LAO EX-EMPLOYEES AND "HIGH-RISK" PERSONS WHO MAY SOON BE GOING TO THE US.

7. ON THE QUESTION OF TOTAL NUMBER THAT MIGHT GO TO THE US, I THINK WE NEED TO DO MORE DEFINING OF CATEGORIES AND DO MORE HOMEWORK BETWEEN VIENTIANE AND UDORN BEFORE WE CAN COME UP WITH A TOTAL FIGURE. FOR EXAMPLE, IF WE ARE TALKING ABOUT A BROAD CATEGORY OF THAI DAM WHO HAVE EXPRESSED A DESIRE TO GO TO THE US (AS VIENTIANE DOES IN PARA 5 OF REF A), WE HAVE 1200 SUCH PEOPLE IN NONGKHAI, AND THESE MAY BE DIFFERENT FROM THE 750 THAT VIENTIANE MENTIONS. IF THERE IS NO OVERLAP BETWEEN THESE TWO GROUPS, THE NUMBER IS CLOSE TO 2000. IF ON THE OTHER HAND WE TALK OF A NARROWER CATEGORY OF THOSE ASSOCIATED WITH THE US, WE HAVE 448, TO WHICH SHOULD BE ADDED THE NUMBER THAT ARE STILL IN LAOS.

CONFIDENTIAL
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PAGE 02 UDORN 00487 02 OF 02 220934Z

8. AFTER WE HAD RECEIVED FORMAL REQUESTS FOR POLITICAL ASYLUM FROM 22 THAI DAM FAMILIES I ASKED THAT THE THAI DAM LEADERS SEND US LISTS OF THOSE THAI DAM WHO WERE USG EMPLOYEES AND THOSE WHO HAVE CLOSE RELATIVES IN THE US. THEY RESPONDED WITH THESE LISTS PLUS A LIST OF ALL 1200 WHO WANT TO GO TO THE US.

9. SHOULD WE CONTINUE TO HOLD THE THAI DAM REQUESTS WITHOUT SENDING IN VISAS FALCON MESSAGES UNTIL THE QUESTION OF LIMITED PAROLE FOR THAI DAM IS DECIDED? IF THE DECISION ALLOWS ONLY CERTAIN THAI DAM TO GO, THEN WE WOULD PRESUMABLY SEND IN VISAS FALCON MESSAGES ONLY ON THOSE WHO WOULD BE COVERED BY THE PAROLE AUTHORITY. REQUEST ADVICE ON THIS POINT.

10. IF THE PAROLE AUTHORITY FOR THAI DAM IS MORE RESTRICTIVE THAN THAT FOR LAO, HOWEVER, WE WILL FACE A SEVERE PRACTICAL PROBLEM OF SEGREGATING THAI DAM FROM LAO. ONCE THEY WOULD DISCOVER THAT IT WAS MORE ADVANTAGEOUS TO BE LAO, MANY OF THE NONGKHAI THAI DAM WOULD SOFT-PEDAL THEIR THAI DAM BACKGROUND AND SIMPLY DESCRIBE THEMSELVES AS LAO. EXCEPT FOR THOSE OLDER PERSONS BORN IN NORTH VIETNAM WE WOULD BE HARD PUT TO TELL THE DIFFERENCE. THE CITIFIED THAI DAM IN NONGKHAI ARE FAIRLY FAR ON THE ROAD OF ACCULTURATION TO BECOMING LAO.

11. IN CONCLUSION, IF IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO CONSIDER THE THAI DAM REFUGEES AS VIETNAMESE (AS RECOMMENDED IN UDORN 414), THEY SHOULD AT LEAST RECEIVE AS FAVORABLE TREATMENT IN TERMS OF ENTERING THE US AS IS CONTEMPLATED FOR THE LAO. IN PARTICULAR IT WOULD BE UNFORTUNATE TO TAG THE THAI DAM IN NONGKHAI AS "HILL TRIBESMEN" AND THEN USE THIS LABEL AS JUSTIFICATION FOR INSISTING THAT THEY ALL SETTLE IN THAILAND.

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